

Abstract

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Title: Reading the Dream Text: A Nexus between Dreams and Texts in the Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity.

Author: Erik Alvstad

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Department: Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Gothenburg, Box 200, SE-405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

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This study deals with conceptions and practices related to dreams in early rabbinic Judaism. One aspect of the Jewish dream culture in particular is considered, viz. the tendency evinced in the rabbinic literature of Late Antiquity to associate dreams and texts with each other. The juxtaposing of elements pertaining to the discourse on dreams and elements relating to the discourse on texts are discernable in rabbinic texts of many different genres, indicating that aspects of these phenomena were considered analogous on some level. In the study, points of intersection between dreams and texts in the rabbinic literature are identified, described and examined through analyses of narratives, aphorisms, prayers, rituals and omnia associated with dreams. It is shown that an examination of the nexus between dreams and texts in the rabbinic literature has the potential to yield substantial knowledge of how the nature of dreams was conceived of in rabbinic Judaism of Late Antiquity, as well as to garner insights into some of the culturally modelled procedures that were contrived specifically to respond to the phenomenon of dreaming. In the study some of the underlying cultural problems and social tensions that the texts involved might represent attempts to deal with are identified. It is furthermore argued that the articulations of a dream-text nexus in the rabbinic literature express and play on a fundamental ambivalence regarding the nature and status of the dream and its relation to the culturally sanctioned texts, first and foremost the Bible.

Keywords:

dreams, rabbinic Judaism, Late Antiquity, Babylonian Talmud, Palestinian Talmud, Midrash, Talmudic Dreambook (Bavli Berakhot 55a-57b), text-centred community, oneiric discourse, dream-text nexus, dream interpretation, dream narrative, oneiric reading, catalogue of dream omnia, dream ritual, dream prayer

READING THE DREAM TEXT

A Nexus between Dreams and Texts in the
Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity

av

fil. mag. Erik Alvstad
Institutionen för litteratur, idéhistoria och religion

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